

Xander Bogaerts Already Superstar In Aruba After 'Dream' Season With Boston Red Sox by Ricky Doyle on Mon, Jan 20, 2014 at 4:54PM Share this:



Xander Bogaerts is just 21 years old and has just 18 regular season games under his belt, yet he's already a well-known name throughout Boston. He also happens to be a total superstar in his native Aruba. Bogaerts, who shined during the Boston Red Sox' 2013 World Series run, received a hero's welcome upon returning to Aruba earlier this offseason. The new star status is something that Bogaerts certainly is welcoming, although the up-and-coming infielder told the Boston Herald's Scott Lauber that the whole situation still is hard to fully grasp. "Remember the triple I hit against the Cardinals at their home [in Game 3 of the World Series]?" Bogaerts asked Lauber during a recent phone interview. "That for me was a big moment. I think it was my first hit in the World Series. It was like a confidence boost. I was actually thinking about that today, just reflecting on the season, like, 'Wow, this really happened. It's not a dream.'" Bogaerts played an important role in the Red Sox' postseason run after taking over for a struggling Will Middlebrooks at third base. Bogaerts hit .296 (8-for-27) and posted a .412 on-base percentage in 12 playoff games this past October, giving the Red Sox and his devoted fans back home even more reason to be excited about his big-league future. "Everyone wants a part of him and everyone wants him to do something," Bogaerts' mother, Sandra Brown, told the Boston Herald. "The main word here is 'overwhelming.' In the first press conference we had, I told everyone, 'Remember, he's just 21.' Everyone wants him to be like a celebrity. The whole show around it, that's not so important for us. It's time again to settle down and get back into his training." Bogaerts is the first Aruba-born player to win a World Series, and he's hands-down the most promising baseball prospect that the island has ever produced. Those living in Aruba recognize Bogaerts' amazing potential, and he already has a Little League field named after him. The field — appropriately named "Xander Bogaerts Ballpark" — features a billboard with his photo. "I used to play there. It's about 30 seconds from my house," Bogaerts told Lauber. "When I pass it, I see the big, 10-foot wall saying my name. Man, that's really special. Just to see how thankful and how happy the people are for you, it's crazy, man. I can go to a restaurant, and if I sign two balls, I can get a whole meal." Those signed baseballs might soon be worth more than just a meal if Bogaerts lives up to the hype that's already stretching from Boston to Aruba and beyond.

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